

Mechanical Engineer

Design anything that moves, heats, cools or carries a load. The broadest engineering degree there is.

TYPICAL PAY

\$104,110

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$74k to \$164k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Manufacturers, energy plants,
consulting firms, car and aerospa...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Calculus, physics and chemistry. Strong math grades are what get you admitted to an engineering program.
- 2 Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering** 4 years
Four years, accredited by ABET (the body that accredits engineering degrees in the United States). Statics, dynamics, thermodynamics, fluids, materials and machine design are the spine of it.
- 3 Internship or co-op** Summers, or alternating semesters
Paid placements at a manufacturer or a plant. Purdue runs the largest mechanical engineering program in the country and a formal cooperative education program alongside it.
- 4 First engineering job** Year 1
You work under experienced engineers on one part of a bigger system. Expect two years before you own a design outright.
- 5 Optional Professional Engineer license** 4 or more years
The Fundamentals of Engineering exam, four years of verified experience, then the Principles and Practice of Engineering exam.

Pros and cons

- + The widest engineering degree, so you can switch industries
- + Rapid projected growth and a bright outlook rating
- + Four years to a six figure median
- The degree is hard and a lot of people leave it
- Manufacturing jobs move with the economy and with plants
- Design offices expect unpaid extra hours before deadlines

Good to know

68 boards, one exam system

There is no single national engineering license in the United States. The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying coordinates 68 separate state and territory boards, which is why the...

Accreditation is a worldwide system

ABET (the accrediting body for engineering degrees in the United States) has accredited 4,863 programs at 950 colleges and universities in 42 countries, and more than 200,000 students gradua...

Optional boosts

Thermal and fluid systems. Manufacturing and process. Mechatronics and robotics. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning design.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Mechanical Engineers (17-2141.00)

NCEES: engineering licensure

ABET: accreditation

Purdue University: undergraduate mechanical engineering

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/mechanical-engineer>



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